

Annual Report of Accomplishments and Outcomes
Fundamental State-based Occupational Health & Safety Surveillance Program
Georgia Department of Public Health
Project Period: July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012 (Year 2)

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Surveillance Activities:

All of the 20 Occupational Health Indicators have been analyzed for the years 2006-2009. In addition, three state-specific indicators (Work-related asthma, Arthritis among workers, and Workplace secondhand smoke exposure) were created. A working relationship with the Georgia Board of Workers' Compensation (GBWC) has been established. The workers' compensation data needed for Indicators #5 and #8 were obtained in September 2011. Georgia's first Occupational Health Surveillance Indicator Report, covering years 2006-2009, is near completion and will be shared with stakeholders and partners after publication approval.

Potential Outcomes: Establishment of a data sharing agreement with GBWC will provide opportunities to conduct additional analysis of workers' compensation data including comparisons with other data sources. Dissemination of the surveillance report will increase awareness of occupational injuries, illnesses, and fatalities in Georgia as well as increase program collaborations and interventions.

BRFSS

Three additional occupational health-related questions were added to the 2012 Georgia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Two of these questions are the occupation and industry questions recommended by NIOSH. The third question was adapted from the National Health Interview Survey to capture the length of time a person has been or was employed in an occupation. The two injury-related occupational health questions that were added to the 2011 Georgia BRFSS were also added to the 2012 survey. *Potential Outcomes:* Inclusion of these five questions in the BRFSS survey will allow for more detailed analysis of workers who were injured on the job by occupation/industry and to determine who paid for the treatment. In addition further analysis by chronic conditions and health risk behaviors by industry/occupation can be conducted. This will allow for the creation of targeted occupational health-related interventions throughout the state.

Research Projects:

Worksite Wellness Survey

Ms. Bayakly and Ms. Lavender have collaborated with the Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH) Worksite Wellness Coordinator to develop a statewide Worksite Wellness Survey. Currently in the planning stages, a survey has been drafted and additional funding is being sought. *Potential Outcomes:* This survey will help document the existing policies and environments affecting physical activity, nutrition, injury, health screening, and tobacco use in Georgia worksites. The results of the survey will also help leverage the creation of more workplace wellness programs in Georgia businesses.

Abstract Submissions

Ms. Lavender submitted two abstracts to the 2012 Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists (CSTE) Annual Conference in Omaha, Nebraska. The abstract entitled “*Characteristics of healthcare workers who did not receive annual influenza vaccination, Georgia 2010*” was selected for oral presentation. The abstract entitled “*Disease risks among non-smoking employees exposed to secondhand smoke at work, Georgia, 2009-2010*” was selected for poster presentation. In addition, an abstract entitled “*Impact of perceived racial discrimination on employee health: Results from the Georgia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 2010*” was selected for oral presentation at the 2012 American Public Health Association (APHA) Annual Meeting and Exposition. *Potential Outcomes:* Results of these studies have created opportunities for collaborations with the Georgia’s Influenza Program, Tobacco Use Prevention Program, and potentially, Employee Assistance Programs (EAP).

Bar and restaurant employees/manager interviews

In January 2011 the city of Savannah, Georgia adopted a model smoke-free city ordinance prohibiting smoking in all public places, including restaurants and bars. In collaboration with GDPH District Environmental Health Inspectors, a team of five GDPH staff, including epidemiologists and evaluators from the Tobacco Use Prevention Program, Cardiovascular Health Program, and Occupational Health Surveillance Program traveled to Savannah in January 2012 to conduct key informant interviews with bar owners, employees, and customers to gauge the perceived impact of the ordinance on the business, air quality, and employee health. *Potential Outcomes:* A report of overall results from these interviews will be disseminated and shared with public health districts and policy makers throughout the state. Also, findings will be shared through a poster presentation at the 2012 National Conference on Tobacco and Health.

Future Data Analysis

Ms. Lavender, and Ms. Viani Ramirez-Irizzary (Georgia Violent Death Reporting System Epidemiologist) are collaborating on re-coding the occupational text fields available in the Georgia Violent Death Reporting System (GVDRS) database according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ 2010 Standard Occupational Codes for all violent deaths (homicide, suicide, and legal intervention) that occurred in Georgia between 2006-2009. Over 8,000 deaths were recorded. *Potential Outcome:* An analysis is being conducted.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Lead Referrals:

In collaboration with the Georgia Adult Blood Level Epidemiology and Surveillance (ABLES) Program, Ms. Bayakly and Ms. Lavender networked with the Florida ABLES Program to learn more about their experience in establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Florida ABLES program and OSHA, as well as to understand the process and benefits and risks of lead referrals. *Potential Outcome:* Other states' MOU's are currently being reviewed with Georgia's future participation being considered.

Georgia Occupational Health Advisory Committee:

Individuals representing the Georgia Office of Highway Safety, Georgia Board of Workers' Compensation (GBWC), Emory University Center for Injury Control, Project Safe Georgia, Agnes Scott College, and Georgia DPH Emergency Preparedness have accepted invitations to join the Georgia Occupational Health Advisory Committee. Adding these organizations to the Advisory Committee provides more opportunities for collaboration and occupational health data use. *Potential Outcomes:* The last Advisory Committee meeting occurred on June 27, 2012, during which a representative from GBWC gave a presentation on the workers' compensation system in Georgia and use of workers' compensation data, during which the possibility of a data sharing agreement was discussed. In addition, interest in tuberculosis (TB) referrals was expressed from an OSHA representative. Georgia's future participation in TB referrals is currently being considered.